isolated freak of casuistical ingenuity, but one subordinate element in a comprehensive system of social philosophy, which gave its poignancy to the controversy of which it became the centre. The passion which fed on its dusty dialectics was fanned by the conviction that the issue at stake was not merely a legal technicality. It was the fate of the whole scheme of mediaeval thought, which had attempted to treat economic affairs as part of a hierarchy of values, embracing all interests and activities, of which the apex was religion.

If the Reformation was a revolution, it was a revolution which left almost intact both the lower ranges of ecclesiastical organization and the traditional scheme of social thought. The villager who, resisting the temptations of the alehouse, morris dancing or cards, attended his parish church from 1530 to 1560, must have been bewildered by a succession of changes in the appearance of the building and the form of the services. But there was little to make him conscious of any alteration in the social system of which the church was the centre, or in the duties which that system imposed upon himself. After, as before, the Reformation, the parish continued to be a community in which religious and social obligations were inextricably intertwined, and it was as a parishioner, rather than as a subject of the secular authority, that he bore his

share of public burdens and performed such public functions as fell to his lot. The officers of whom he saw most in the routine of his daily life were the churchwardens. The place where most public business was transacted, and where news of the doings of the great world came to him, was the parish church. The contributions levied from him were demanded in the name of the parish. Such education as was available for his children was often given by the. curate or parish schoolmaster. Such training in co-operation with his fellows as he received sprang from common undertakings poaintained by the parish, which owned property,